

WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D. C.

ORDER NO. 2544

IN THE MATTER OF:

Served April 10, 1984

Application of THE AIRPORT
CONNECTION, INC., for Temporary
Authority to Conduct Charter
Operations

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Case No. AP-84-14

Application of THE AIRPORT
CONNECTION, INC., for Temporary
Authority to Conduct Special
Operations

Case No. AP-84-15

By applications filed March 21, 1984, The Airport Connection, Inc. ("TAC" or "applicant"), seeks temporary authority to transport passengers and their baggage over irregular routes, in special operations and charter operations, between Washington National Airport and Dulles International Airport, on the one hand, and, on the other, points in the Metropolitan District.*/ By its terms, TAC's application would restrict charter operations to passengers and aircraft crews having a prior or subsequent movement by air.

Applicant has been designated as the primary ground transportation contractor by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for the contract period May 1, 1984, through April 30, 1989. A contract for similar services is currently held by Airport Limo, Inc. Because Airport Limo's contract expires April 30, 1984, TAC seeks temporary authority in order that it might carry out its FAA contract obligations while obtaining the required certificate of public convenience and necessity from the Commission. In its application, TAC states that temporary authority is essential in order to assure that the public will experience no disruption in service to and from the airports.

Under the terms of its contract with FAA, applicant's special operations will consist of scheduled operations to and from the Washington Convention Center and various hotels in the Metropolitan District. Its charter operations would be available to transport

*/ These applications are interpreted to preclude transportation solely within the Commonwealth of Virginia. See Compact, Title II, Article XII, Section 1(b).

groups between the airports and points within the Metropolitan District. TAC will conduct its proposed service using 14 coaches owned by the FAA, two 20-passenger minibuses and 25 11-passenger vans currently on order.

Hugh Riddle, Jr., FAA's deputy director of the Metropolitan Washington Airports (MWA), submitted an affidavit in support of the applications. According to Mr. Riddle, the public need for bus and limousine service at the airports is substantial and continuous. Approximately 3,000,000 passengers use Dulles each year. In 1981-82, it is estimated that 9.2 percent of those passengers used bus transportation. The witness expects that percentage to increase under FAA's contract with TAC. Passengers at National Airport also make extensive use of ground transportation. It is estimated that approximately 150,000 to 200,000 persons a year use bus service at National despite the fact that the airport's location makes taxi service and Metrorail practical alternatives. Disruption of ground access to the airports would constitute a hardship for thousands of travelers and place a severe burden on such other modes of public transportation as are available. Because applicant will hold the primary contract with FAA for the provision of bus and limousine service at both Dulles and National Airports after April 30, 1984, FAA cannot assume that those services will continue to be provided unless TAC is authorized to operate them. For this reason, it is essential for the provision of adequate ground transportation services to the public at the airports that TAC be authorized by the Commission to begin service May 1, 1984.

Several carriers hold certificates to conduct airport charter operations. When contacted by the Commission's staff, none of them expressed a desire to protest TAC's application for temporary authority to conduct charter operations. Moreover, TAC's operations suit the needs of airport travelers in a manner that none of the other carriers' charters do. Mr. Riddle states that ". . . ground transportation charters for air travelers are often required on an emergency basis, as when flights are diverted or cancelled, stranding hundreds of persons at the airport. The primary ground transportation operator is far better situated to have equipment available for such charters quickly on an emergency basis than are other operators in the area."

After considering the record in this case, we find that applicant has met the burden of proof imposed by Title II, Article XII, Section 4(d)(3) of the Compact and should be granted temporary authority. The current ground transportation system at the airports consists of charter and special operations. After April 30, 1984, no carrier other than TAC will hold a contract with the FAA to provide these services. If these services are to be provided, the grant of authority herein is required.

An appropriate certificate of insurance has been filed.

THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED:

1. That The Airport Connection, Inc., is hereby granted temporary authority to transport passengers and their baggage over irregular routes, in special operations, between Washington National Airport, Gravelly Point, Va., and Dulles International Airport, Herndon, Va., on the one hand, and, on the other, points in the Metropolitan District.

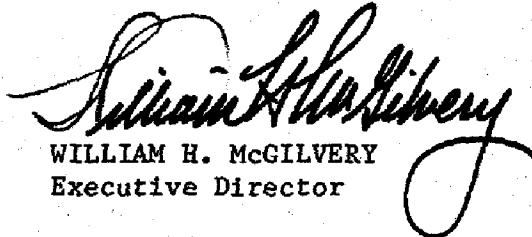
2. That The Airport Connection, Inc., is hereby granted temporary authority to transport passengers and their baggage over irregular routes, in charter operations, between Washington National Airport, Gravelly Point, Va., and Dulles International Airport, Herndon, Va., on the one hand, and, on the other, points in the Metropolitan District, restricted to the transportation of persons having a prior or subsequent movement by air.

3. That said temporary authority shall become effective on May 1, 1984, at 12:01 a.m., and shall remain in effect until midnight October 27, 1984, unless otherwise ordered by the Commission.

4. That The Airport Connection, Inc., shall file with the Commission no later than April 23, 1984, two copies of an affidavit certifying compliance with Commission Regulation No. 68-03 governing identification of vehicles.

5. That unless The Airport Connection, Inc., complies with the requirement of the preceding paragraph within the time established therefor or such additional time as may hereafter be authorized, the grant of temporary authority made herein is void and these applications shall stand denied in their entirety.

BY DIRECTION OF THE COMMISSION, COMMISSIONERS WORTHY, SCHIFTER, AND SHANNON:


WILLIAM H. MCGILVERY
Executive Director

